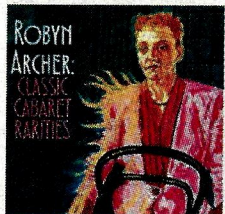




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**ROBYN ARCHER**  
**CLASSIC CABARET RARITIES**  
**ROBYN ARCHER**

**Rouseabout/Undercover Music**



There's a kind of smoky, sensual world-weariness to Robyn Archer's new album. These "cabaret rarities" follow her two acclaimed Brecht-

Weill albums years ago and one can almost smell the coffee and Gauloises. Yet there is also vitality and verve, anger and angst, barbs and bouquets. This is the bipolar world of cabaret, 26 songs across three periods of cabaret's heyday in Berlin and Paris. Archer has lived with this music for a long time – since 1974 and her first *Little Mahagonny* in Adelaide – yet each time she approaches it, she brings something new. It's hard to imagine another performer bringing similar guts to this music. At the outset, Archer prepares the listener for "songs from the street". Indeed, at times we find ourselves, like Henry Lawson, wallowing in the gutter. Many

of the songs here are unfamiliar, only a few have been recorded before, making this a must-have purchase for fans of Archer and the genre. There will be special interest in songs with words and music by Bertolt Brecht and the poetic tribute to Jacques Brel by Patrick McGuiness, which introduces an affecting version of Brel's *Ne me quitte pas*. For several years now Archer has added Melbourne accordionist George Butrumlis to her longstanding partnership with pianist and mentor Michael Morley. Here, the accordion adds a further shade of authenticity. It's good to hear some vocalising from the lads, although Morley could do with some more

lessons with his faux Gregorian chant. Many of the translations are by Morley and Archer, and it's fun to see traces of Aussie vernacular spicing up the already raunchy lyrics. They tell us that, regardless of time and place, this music is everlasting. A pity that this otherwise excellent album contains such skimpy information; it's well researched and deserves extensive commentary. Let's hope Archer's show in August with an ensemble from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra will be recorded. Can anyone tire of this music? And what better advocate than that fearless proselytiser, our very own Archer.  
**Vincent Plush**